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# STATISTICAL SUMMARY

BUREAU OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS, U. S. D. A.

SS-19

MAY 31, 1944

## WEATHER HAMPERED SPRING WORK

Farm work backward over much of country because of wet weather. After wettest March in more than 20 years, important areas had also 45 percent more than normal rain in April (amount about like 1927, year of big Mississippi flood). Temperatures also two to six degrees below normal in April, especially in portions of Corn Belt. Farmers were badly behind with work in early May, with possible effect on certain acreages. Heavy rains, however, improved winter wheat prospect in Southern Plains and Pacific Northwest. Floods destroyed or damaged about 200,000 acres of wheat in Missouri and Illinois; total abandonment expected to be around 6 million acres, largely where grain would not sprout last fall.

## GOOD WHEAT CROP INDICATED

Winter wheat production forecast May 1 at 662 million bushels, a fourth larger than last year and 16 percent above the 10-year average (1933-42). Acreage remaining for harvest 41 million acres, one-fifth larger than last year. Prospective abandonment from all causes 13 percent, compared with 10.3 percent for 1943 and 19.5 percent 10-year average. Indicated yield on May 1 was 16.2 bushels per harvested acre compared with 15.6 last year and average of 15 bushels.

## MORE PEACHES THIS YEAR

Early May peach prospect in 10 Southern States 13,930,000 bushels, compared with only 5,378,000 bushels last year and 10-year average of 16½ million bushels. Early spring prospects have been reduced by frost, especially serious in central Georgia, Alabama and Oklahoma.

## MORE HAY COMING - AND NEEDED

Grass prospect good so far, fortunately; total carry-over of hay May 1 was about 10 million tons, 3 million tons, or 23 percent less than a year ago—with more hay-eating animals on farms. Condition of tame hay May 1 was 83 percent of "normal" compared with average of 78. If farmers cut 60 million acres as intended, crop of tame hay could run to 85 million tons this year, which would be slightly less than last year but about 10 million tons above 10-year average. Estimated such a crop would give around .98 ton per hay-consuming animal on farms next winter, compared with average of .94 ton.

## EARLY POTATO PROSPECT DOUBTFUL

Early white potato crop in 10 Southern States and California showed poor prospect in early May. Condition 71 percent on May 1, compared with 78 percent year previous and 10-year average of 77 percent. Growing conditions especially unfavorable in important commercial areas.

## BIG CITRUS CROPS

1943-44 crops of oranges and grapefruit a record. All oranges (excluding tangerines) estimated at 100,708,000 boxes, 18 percent more than record crop of last season. Increase was entirely in Florida Valencias (now coming to market). Tangerine production in Florida 3,600,000 boxes, compared with 4,200,000 boxes in 1942-43. Total U. S. grapefruit production placed at 53,079,000 boxes, 5 percent above last year's record crop. California lemon production 12,800,000 boxes, 14 percent less than last season.

## GOOD MAPLE CROP

Maple crop this spring good; long run of sap. About 7 percent fewer trees tapped than year ago, due to help shortage. Total output this spring estimated at 619,000 pounds of maple sugar and 2,589,000 gallons of sirup. Sugar crop 7 percent over last year and sirup about 1 percent more. Early prices for sugar averaged 48.9 cents a pound, against 45.3 cents last year; sirup \$3.06 a gallon, compared with \$2.85 last spring.

## MILK PRODUCTION UP SLIGHTLY

April milk production estimated 10.2 billion pounds, a seasonal increase of 4 percent over March output, which was 9.8 billion pounds; but production lower than April 1943 or 1942. Seasonal upswing not quite as sharp

this April as last two years or average. Number of milk cows around 2 percent larger than year ago but milk per cow less, due to delayed pastures and bad weather. Milk production first four months of 1944 totaled 37.2 billion pounds against 37.1 billion pounds during same months last year.

Creamery butter production in March 123 million pounds, 12 percent under previous March. During four weeks ended April 27, weekly butter production averaged 13 percent lower than previous year. Forty percent of creamery butter set aside in May for Government and 50 percent must be set aside during June

PARITY PRICES FOR FARM PRODUCTS AND ACTUAL PRICES RECEIVED

COMMODITY AND UNIT	ACTUAL PRICE		PARITY PRICE
	APR. 15 1944	MAY 15 1944	MAY 15 1944
Wheat, bu. . . . . dol.	1.47	1.47	1.50
Corn, bu. . . . . dol.	1.15	1.15	1.09
Oats, bu. . . . . dol.	.79	.80	.678
Cotton, lb. . . . . ct.	20.24	19.80	21.08
Potatoes, bu. . . . . dol.	1.37	1.34	1.22
Hogs, 100 lb. . . . . dol.	13.00	12.70	12.40
Beef cattle, 100 lb. . . dol.	12.10	12.10	9.21
Veal calves, 100 lb. . . dol.	13.20	13.30	11.50
Lambs, 100 lb. . . . . dol.	13.60	13.40	10.00
Butterfat, lb. . . . . ct.	50.9	50.7	42.3
Milk, wholesale, 100 lb. . dol.	3.19	3.14	2.45
Chickens, live, lb. . . . ct.	23.7	24.4	19.4
Eggs, doz. . . . . ct.	27.1	27.2	30.0

<sup>1</sup>Adjusted for seasonal variation.



(last year the set-aside was 50 percent in both months). Civilian supply in May presumably around 100 million pounds, somewhat less than previous months this year. Cold storage stocks of butter April were 82 million pounds, against only 17 million pounds year previous.

#### RECORD EGG PRODUCTION

Hens laid 6,978,000 eggs in April, a record for the month, 4 percent above April last year and 37 percent above 10-year average. Total egg lay for the first four months also a record, 9 percent above same months last year and 56 percent above 10-year average. Number of eggs per hen laid during first four months 54.3 compared with 47 average.

Number of laying hens and pullets during April 414,319,000, up 5 percent from April last year and 37 percent above average. Number of young chicks on farms May 1 from this year's hatching 464,876,000 chicks, 1.4 percent less than year ago but 33 percent above average.

#### LIVESTOCK

*Cattle* on feed in the Corn Belt, in early April, were 300,000 to 400,000 head fewer than year previous, probably smallest number in 6 years. However, there are large numbers of cattle on pasture in and out of range States; on January 1 were 8 percent more steers, 9 percent more beef heifers and 10 percent more beef cows in Northcentral region than year previous; many of these will make good beef, even though not fed in dry lots. Osage and Flint Hills pastures in Kansas and Oklahoma well stocked and feed good, but moisture has been lacking in far Western pastures.

*Hogs* coming to market May-September are largely from last fall's pig crop of almost 48 million head - which was 10 percent larger than previous record fall crop in 1942. Slaughter will be somewhat larger than last summer.

Total *early lamb* crop for the country reported 6 percent less this year than last. Early lambs in California, principal early lamb State, developed poorly because of bad feed conditions.

Stocks of *meat* in public warehouses and packing plants on May 1 totaled 1,215 million pounds, only 41 million pounds less than the peak on March 1; stocks on May 1 were 56 percent larger than average that date for past five years.

#### COLD STORAGE WELL FILLED

Cold storage continues to be well filled. The May 1 report indicated cooler storage space in all public warehouses 82 percent occupied, compared with 80 per-

cent on April 1. Freezer storage space was 85 percent occupied May 1 compared with 88 percent April 1. Cooler storage space in meat packing plants was 95 percent occupied and freezer space 87 percent on May 1.

#### HIRED FARM WORKERS 13 PERCENT FEWER THAN LAST SPRING

The number of people working on farms May 1 was 10,068,000, about 4 percent fewer than on same date last year and about 9 percent below average. Estimated number of unpaid family workers was 8,079,000, down about 2 percent from last year. Number of hired workers 1,989,000, which was about 13 percent fewer than year ago. Bad weather accounted for a little of the smaller employment but most of it was due to shortage of help. Family workers comprised 80 percent of total working force this May; in May 1940 they made up 77 percent of the total force.

#### FOOD HANDLING CHARGES SLIGHTLY LOWER

Total charges for marketing the basket of typical farm food products amounted to \$197 in March. Of these charges \$17 were Government payments to the food handlers and \$180 represented spread between retail price and farmers' price. March figure still represented a decline of \$23 from the high point reached last June.

Retail cost to consumers of the farm food basket was \$433 in April, same as in March, and lowest since February 1943. Payment to farmers for equivalent basket was \$253.

The farmers' share of the consumers' food dollar for March (revised) was 59 cents and for April 58 cents. Middlemen's share of the consumers' food dollar, excluding Government marketing payments, was 42 cents in April, but when Government marketing payments were included it was 45 cents.

#### FARM INCOME

Total income from farm products sold during March, including Government payments, \$1,485 million compared with \$1,402 million in March 1943. Government payments in March \$77 million compared with \$92 million previous March.

The January-March total income this year \$4,511 million, which included \$224 million Government payments. Comparable figure for 1943 was \$3,968 million, which included \$271 million Government payments.

#### CURRENT INDEXES FOR AGRICULTURE

INDEX NUMBERS	BASE PERIOD	MAY 1944
Prices received by farmers . .	1910-14 = 100	194
Prices paid by farmers, interest and taxes . . . . .	1910-14 = 100	170
Parity ratio . . . . .	1910-14 = 100	114
Wholesale prices of food . . .	1910-14 = 100	162
Retail prices of food . . . .	1910-14 = 100	<sup>1</sup> 174
Farm wage rates . . . . .	1910-14 = 100	<sup>1</sup> 292
Weekly factory earnings . . .	1910-14 = 100	<sup>2</sup> 413
RATIOS	LONG-TIME MAY-AVERAGE	MAY 1944
Hog-corn ratio, U. S. . . . .	11.2	11.0
Butterfat-feed ratio, U. S. . .	22.7	23.1
Milk-feed ratio, U. S. . . . .	1.11	1.27
Egg-feed ratio, U. S. . . . .	13.8	11.8
PRODUCTION COMPARISONS	JAN.-APR. 1943	JAN.-APR. 1944
Milk, (Bil. lb.) . . . . .	37.1	37.2
Eggs, (Bil.) . . . . .	21.6	23.5
Beef, (Dr. wt., mil. lb.) . . .	1,876	2,181
Lamb & Mutton (Dr. wt., mil. lb.)	264	271
Pork & Lard (Mil. lb.) . . . .	3,609	5,301

<sup>1</sup>April figure.

<sup>2</sup>Factory pay roll per employed worker adjusted for seasonal variation. March figure.

For more detailed information, write the Division of Economic Information, Bureau of Agricultural Economics, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington 25, D.C., or telephone Republic 4142-Branch 4407.